

## CIA Patrols Into China Said Halted

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The Nixon administration has ordered a halt to the dispatching of special CIA-supported teams of Laotian tribesmen into China on reconnaissance patrols from bases in northern Laos, according to well-informed diplomatic sources.

These patrols—which sometimes range 200 miles inside China's Yunnan Province on road-watching, telephone-tapping missions—have been going on for a number of years, and their existence was known to the Peking regime.

Nevertheless, in a recent action designed to avoid any possible incident which could sour U.S. relations with Peking before President Nixon's forthcoming trip to the Chinese mainland, the forays have been halted, according to official sources here.

Some sources also suggest that the intelligence value of these operations may also have decreased somewhat.

Although no Americans go on these patrols, the Laotian hill tribesmen who carry them out are recruited, trained and equipped by the CIA, and the staging area for the patrols is a CIA outpost in northern Laos.

The Laotians are native to the border region, and the intelligence-gathering operation took advantage of the normal movements back and forth of these hill people.

While the White House, CIA and the U.S. embassy in Vietnam have never commented on or confirmed these activities—which reportedly date back to the Johnson administration—the patrols have been mentioned in numerous press reports by U.S. correspondents in Laos.

See PATROLS, A12, Col. 3

In late 1970 and early this year, articles by Michael Morrow of Dispatch News Service International described the reconnaissance operations in considerable detail.

As recently as June 27, Arnold Abrams of The Philadelphia Bulletin reported that the raids were still being carried out despite the onset of Ping Pong Diplomacy.

The order to stop these patrols, according to informed sources, came very recently. Presidential aide Henry Kissinger's secret trip to Peking was made July 9 to 11.

In another move relating to the forthcoming Nixon visit, a press report last week, citing administrative sources, said the United States had suspended flights over Communist China by high-flying SR-71 spy planes and unmanned reconnaissance drones. This concession was also depicted as a move designed to avoid any incident which could interfere with the President's journey.

However, well placed defense and intelligence officials, asked about the reported suspension, said privately that to the best of their knowledge there had never been any SR-71 flights over the Chinese mainland.

Officials say there was a suspension of the unmanned drone flights some months ago, partly for diplomatic reasons and partly because of technical problems and the vulnerability of these drones to Communist gunners. At least two of the drones were shot down since late in 1969, one over the mainland and one over Hainan Island.

There have been flights of the older-vintage U-2 spy plane over mainland China carried out by the Nationalist Chinese, but officials hint that these flights, too, have not been scheduled for about a year.

The United States for some time has relied on satellites for photographic coverage of goings-on inside China. The SR-71s based in Asia, sources say, are used primarily for flights over North Korea.

# Fulbright-Kissinger Relations Becoming Diplomatic

By JOHN W. FINNEY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 5—

Senator J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Henry Kissinger, the President's national security adviser, have taken a first step, over drinks at the Senator's home, toward restoring diplomatic relations between them.

With White House endorsement, Mr. Kissinger met informally with 10 members of the Senate committee Monday evening to review the Administration's initiative toward normal relations with Communist China.

In the view of Republican members who arranged the unannounced meeting, apparently at White House instigation, the content of the hour-and-a-half discussion was not as important as the fact that the two sides were talking again.

For months, Senator Fulbright, in speeches, testimony and private comments, had been complaining that Mr. Kissinger's refusal to come before Congressional committees on

the ground that he was a personal adviser to the President was undermining the advisory role of the Senate in foreign policy.

After the meeting Senator Fulbright still expressed dissatisfaction over the format of informal get-togethers with the Presidential adviser. The discussion, he told a reporter, was "pleasant but too brief, about half as long as it should have been."

Furthermore, the Senator said he had "grave reservations about the precedent" of informal meetings. "A better procedure in terms of restoring the proper relationships" between the Senate and the Executive branch, he said, would be for Mr. Kissinger to appear before the committee in executive session.

Mr. Kissinger was not available to give his reaction to the meeting.

The White House staff, which openly regards the Foreign Relations Committee as one of its principal adversaries on Capitol Hill, had blocked earlier efforts to get Mr. Kissinger and the committee together for private policy discussions.

In testimony two weeks ago before a Senate Judiciary subcommittee considering legislation sponsored by Mr. Fulbright to force executive officials to appear before Congressional committees, the Senator had complained that Mr. Kissinger's failure to consult with the Foreign Relations Committee either before or after his recent trip to China was "a striking example of the way in which the new foreign-policy apparatus in the White House circumvents the Congress."

The Fulbright testimony apparently led to the meeting, for subsequently Senator Jacob K. Javits of New York, a Republican member of the committee, urged Senator Fulbright to invite Mr. Kissinger to meet with the committee at the Fulbright home. The invitation was reluctantly extended by the Senator and promptly accepted by Mr. Kissinger.

According to Republican participants, Senator Fulbright opened the meeting by saying: "Henry, we are delighted to have you at home, but we would like to have you someday in executive session before the committee." Mr. Kissinger reportedly replied that he ap-

preacted the committee's desire but that as the President's personal adviser he felt he should not appear before a Congressional committee.

With the lines thus drawn, the two sides engaged in what Senators Javits and Hugh Scott, the Senate Republican leader, described as a "forthcoming" and "candid" discussion of China policy.

Mr. Kissinger reviewed his discussions with Chinese Premier Chou En-lai during which he arranged President Nixon's planned visit to China. He also outlined the objectives of the President's trip to Peking and

discussed the Administration's position on the seating of Communist China in the United Nations.

The committee members, in turn, were said to have offered views on what the Administration should do regarding China policy.

Senator Javits described the discussion as "one of the most forthcoming and one of the most interesting meetings I have ever attended." He suggested that such an informal meeting represented a way "to re-establish communications without laying down a challenge to the White House."

LAOS

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## Laos: New Report, Old Story

The new Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff report on Laos reveals that Washington's involvement in the formerly secret war there is far deeper, and Vientiane's contribution to its own security is far shallower, than practically anybody outside Laos had believed. The Royal Army is pathetic, lucky to muster 25 men in a battalion of 300, the report indicates, so the Central Intelligence Agency now runs an army of 30,000 Lao irregulars (1971 cost: \$70 million) who do battle against the Communist Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese forces fighting in the north. So many Lao soldiers have died, draft-dodged, deserted or enlisted in the Pathet Lao, however, that the CIA found it necessary to import some 4,000 Thai "volunteers" (\$35 million) to help out.

The American effort in Laos cost \$284 million in fiscal 1971, excluding funds for Thais in Laos and for the immensely expensive bombing campaigns against the Ho Chi Minh trail in the south and the fighting grounds around the Plain of Jars in the north. In fiscal 1972 the figure is expected to reach \$374 million. Economic aid is almost half again as large as the total Lao budget. In a country where per capita GNP is estimated at \$36, American spending amounts to \$141 per capita; services rendered include, if you will, the hiring of 24 Filipinos to teach Lao soldiers English. The Lao government, the report says, "continues to be almost totally dependent on the U.S., perhaps more dependent on us than any other government in the world."

And meanwhile, North Vietnamese men and materiel flow down the Ho Chi Minh trail into South Vietnam, Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese forces push into the third of the country not yet under their control, and the tiny country suffers the ravages of an immense war. The precise extent to which the situation there is deteriorating is described in the conclusion of the staff report, published elsewhere on this page today.

Well, what's new? The details are juicy but the thrust of the report is consistent with Mr. Nixon's major statement on Laos of March 6, 1970. He said then that the American purposes in Laos were to save American and allied lives in South Vietnam, by bombing; and to support the "independence and neutrality of Laos as set forth in the 1962 Geneva agreements," by aiding the Laotian government

"when requested." Specifying certain forms of that aid, the President said the U.S. also was conducting "some other activities." Well, now we know "other activities" included items like 14,000 sorties a month, in January, 1970, and unnumbered B-52 raids, still going on, and up.

Through declassifying the previous secret information in the Senate report, however, the President has in fact respected in good measure his earlier pledge "to give the American people the fullest possible information on our involvement (in Laos), consistent with national security." We cannot recall that any other administration ever disclosed so much about secret and continuing operations of the CIA. Unofficial reports had indicated the existence of a CIA role in Laos but there had been no official confirmation or description of it.

Mr. Nixon has not, of course, told all. In particular, he has not conceded that, as Mr. Fulbright and others suspect, funds for CIA support of Thai "volunteers" in Laos came from a defense money bill which had attached to it a Fulbright amendment banning precisely such subterfuges. If so, this is an outrage, but a predictable outrage. It would be unrealistic to think that an administration bent on prosecuting a secret war could not surmount an obstacle like the Fulbright amendment. "Let's face it," Mr. Symington said, in a secret session of the Senate which took place June 7 and whose proceedings were published yesterday, "We have been appropriating money for this war in the blind." Exactly so.

Since it is already widely recognized that the American effort in Laos is linked to the larger effort in South Vietnam and could not survive it, we doubt that anyone will be so shocked and outraged as to demand an end to American activities in Laos now. But the essential point should not be lost. By operating in secrecy and, more than that, by building an organization intended to operate in secrecy, the United States government provided itself the resources to take steps which — if it had been required to take and explain them in public — it might not have taken at all. When a democracy undertakes a policy built on secrecy, it risks falling into such a swamp that — and this is the ultimate irony — it is finally no longer embarrassed by disclosure. On the contrary, it winds up using it to plead for public understanding and support.